

Mission:

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



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Vision: To be the Healthiest State in the Nation

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Smokeless Tobacco: Not a Safe Alternative to Cigarette Smoking***Tobacco Free Seminole Raises Awareness About Smokeless Tobacco During Through With Chew Week***

Sanford, Fla. – Tobacco Free Seminole and Tobacco Free Florida is encouraging Floridians to learn the facts about the harmful effects of using smokeless tobacco and to make a plan to stop using these products. To help raise awareness, Tobacco Free Seminole is observing *Through With Chew Week* from February 16-22.

Lake Howell High School Students Working Against Tobacco (SWAT) Club will display for a week at their cafeteria a big banner "I AM NOT A REPLACEMENT" campaign, and all students at school will have the opportunity to write their personal accomplishments. Also, SWAT Chapter Youth will have a table set up this week at the entrance of the Florida Department of Health in Seminole County at 400 West Airport Boulevard in Sanford with educational material related to the effects of smokeless tobacco on health. SWAT Youth will also record facts about the dangers of using chewing tobacco which will be playing twice a day through the intercom to educate clients.

Compared to the decrease in youth cigarette use, there has not been a significant change in the use of smokeless tobacco products among youth in the state. In 2013, 5 percent of Florida high school students reported current use of smokeless tobacco products¹ compared to 5.1 percent a decade ago.²

Smokeless tobacco includes products such as chew, spit, dip, snuff and snus. These products are commonly used by placing the product between the teeth and gum. The chemicals in smokeless tobacco are then absorbed into the bloodstream through the skin.

"Smokeless tobacco is not a safe alternative to tobacco usage. Using smokeless tobacco can affect you're appearance and eventually the development of oral cancer. This can be avoided by attending our smoking cessation classes to find safe solutions to reduce tobacco usage," said Dr. Swannie Jett, health officer of the Department of Health in Seminole County.

There are many dangers associated with the use of smokeless tobacco. Some of the harmful effects include:

- Cancers of the mouth, tongue, cheek, throat, esophagus, stomach, pancreas, pharynx and larynx
- Increased risk of heart attack and stroke
- Leukoplakia (oral lesions on the cheeks gums, and/or tongue)

Users of smokeless tobacco have an 80 percent higher risk of oral cancer and a 60 percent higher risk of esophageal cancer and of pancreatic cancer compared to non-users.³ The use of smokeless tobacco also causes gum disease (gingivitis), which can lead to bone and tooth loss.⁴ Studies show adolescent boys who use smokeless tobacco have a higher risk of becoming cigarette smokers.⁵

Like cigarettes, smokeless tobacco products contain nicotine, a highly addictive and dangerous chemical. Adolescents' bodies are more sensitive to nicotine, and adolescents are more easily addicted than adults.⁶ Furthermore, most tobacco users start by the age of 18.⁷ These young people rarely consider the long-term health consequences associated with tobacco use when they start and many continue using tobacco well into adulthood, often with serious and even deadly consequences.⁸

Florida Department of Health

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Tobacco Free Seminole works to educate and inform citizens that smokeless tobacco products are not effective ways to quit smoking. Currently, there is no scientific or medical evidence that can prove the use of smokeless tobacco is an effective way for a person to quit smoking.

"Smokeless tobacco is just as addictive. It is not safe alternative," said Shirley Castillo, SWAT – Youth Advocacy Board member from Lake Mary High School in Seminole County.

Floridians who want to quit any form of tobacco have access to the state's free and proven-effective resources, which include free FDA-approved nicotine replacement therapy (NRT), like the patch and gum, when medically appropriate. This combined approach of counseling and NRT may double or triple a tobacco user's chance of quitting.⁹ Tobacco Free Florida's 3 Free & Easy Ways to Quit include:

- CALL: Call the Florida Quitline at 1-877-U-CAN-NOW to speak with a Quit Coach who will help assess a user's addiction and help create a personalized quit plan.
- CLICK: Enroll in the Web Coach®, which will help to create a web-based quit plan unique to each individual user, visit <https://www.quitnow.net/florida>.
- COME IN: Sign up for Quit Smoking Now group classes at your local Area Health Education Center (AHEC) by calling 1-877-848-6696 or visiting <http://www.ahectobacco.com>

Take the initiative this February; make the choice to be Through With Chew. For more information on smokeless tobacco, visit www.tobaccofreeflorida.com/smokelesstobacco.

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ABOUT TOBACCO FREE FLORIDA

DOH's Tobacco Free Florida campaign is a statewide cessation and prevention campaign funded by Florida's tobacco settlement fund.

Tobacco users interested in quitting are encouraged to use one of the state's three ways to quit. To learn about Tobacco Free Florida and the state's free quit resources, visit www.tobaccofreeflorida.com or follow the campaign on Facebook at www.facebook.com/TobaccoFreeFlorida or Twitter at www.twitter.com/tobaccofreefla.

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¹ Florida Youth Tobacco Survey (FYTS), Florida Department of Health, Bureau of Epidemiology, 2013

² Florida Youth Tobacco Survey (FYTS), Florida Department of Health, Bureau of Epidemiology, 2003

³ Boffetta, P, et al., "Smokeless tobacco and cancer," The Lancet 9:667-675, 2008.

⁴ Tomar, SL, "Chewing Tobacco Use and Dental Caries Among U.S. Men," Journal of the American Dental Association, 1999, 130: 160

⁵ Tomar, S, "Is use of smokeless tobacco a risk factor for cigarette smoking? The U.S. experience," Nicotine & Tobacco Research 5(4):561-569, August 2003.

⁶ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke: A Report of the Surgeon General. Atlanta: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Coordinating Center for Health Promotion, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2006

⁷ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Preventing Tobacco Use Among Youth and Young Adults: A Report of the Surgeon General. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2012.

⁸ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Preventing Tobacco Use Among Youth and Young Adults: A Report of the Surgeon General. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2012.